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new grain is ripe? Why does one woman serve out porridge so that every one gets up quickly feeling satisfied, while the guests of another eat and still feel empty? The answer is magic (*ubwanga*). Food, and millet in particular, is specially subject to witchcraft (*ubuloshi*). Wizards stick horns in their granaries to attract the grain of other men. They also send out mysterious black birds (*mawa*) at night to steal the food of neighbours and convey it to their own granaries. How does this happen? The Bemba answers that he does not know, but that it is a well-known fact that wizards have more food than other men. A more subtle form of sorcery takes the goodness out of the millet while it is still growing in the gardens, so that when it is reaped and eaten it has no power to satisfy a hungry man. To protect himself against these dangers counter-magic is the gardener's only hope, and even without definitely suspecting witchcraft, all the Bemba I questioned told me that food could not be expected to last unless some magic of durability had been performed—a magic rite that would keep the granary full (*ukuisula pe na pe*) and would act upon the food so that one little eating pot would satisfy a family instead of two, and 'the little bit of porridge give strength to the heart' (*akabwali kalekosho mutima*).

All these results are produced by the Bemba charm *icibyalilo*, still almost universally used to-day. The form of the charm varies from family to family although there are certain common elements, such as the doctoring of the grain with medicine smoked through it (*ukufutikila*) or by sprinkling (*ukusansa*), the mixing of the old harvest with the new to maintain continuity, and some rite of sympathetic magic by which people are made to feel full with the new grain in order that this property of satisfaction may be conferred on the rest of the crop. All sorts of intermediate forms exist, and the fact that Christian women sometimes sign themselves with the cross before reaping to make the food last shows how strong is this belief that nothing but supernatural aid can carry a woman safely through the hazards of Bemba catering.

The full *icibyalilo* rites are complex and take place in three stages. At sowing, the medicinal herb (*umuti*), sometimes mixed with an activating principle like scrap iron or a piece of rubber, is mixed with the seeds that are sown and sometimes a small portion is buried in the centre of the field or little fire-stands built there for the cooking of the new grain at the approaching harvest. At

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789 reaping, a little knot of millet is usually tied in the centre of the garden and a small fire lit underneath upon which a potsherd full of
● 243 water is set to heat. Medicine is thrown on top when the steam begins to rise. It is believed that this medicated steam travels right through the field (*ukufutikila*). After this a little paste made of the old year's flour is dabbed here and there on the new heads of grain (*ukusansa*). In some families the first grain is carried back to the village in a special basket and the empty granary must be smoked with the same medicine before it is filled. It is common, too, for a little porridge made with old and new flour mixed to be given to two small boys to eat ('Because the stomachs of small children get quickly filled'). The remains of the porridge added to a basket of new grain is then tipped into the granary by one of the little boys who shouts, 'You granary fill up now!' (*We butala uisule!*).

789 In conclusion, the Bemba consider it more or less normal for food to be scarce, and both their agricultural system and methods of distribution make it impossible entirely to prevent such a happening. Traditional magic belief teaches that only by supernatural means can the dangers of a shortage be avoided. This firm conviction combined with the temperamental optimism of the Bemba and their lack of interest in hard agricultural work makes them believe that somehow something will happen. *Butala mumina ua lusato.* 'A granary is like the oesophagus of the python', i.e. you think it looks very small, but really it can enlarge to hold a great deal.

The people's system of measurement and their material equipment makes it difficult for them to estimate their supplies exactly, and in any case it does not pay them to have much more food than their relatives stored in their granaries. All these reasons account for their failure to achieve that attitude of mind which the European describes as 'foresight' or 'thrift'.

Material Possessions of the Bemba.

556 The problem of the annual shortage of the Bemba must now be considered from the general economic point of view as distinct from that of the individual housekeeper. What incentives have the Bemba as a whole to accumulate sufficient surplus to provide them with a margin of safety in case of calamity? It is clear that there is not sufficient food grown in the country, but is